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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Fiftieth session
Agenda items 2 and 8

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION AND OF APARTHEID, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES. REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION (XXIII)

PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AND
THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Letter dated 19 August 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairman of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

GE.98-14219 (E)

I am addressing you with reference to the views expressed by individual members of the Sub-Commission, which contain one-sided assessments concerning the situation of human rights in the Yugoslav Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija.

First and foremost, I must emphasize that the present problems stem from terrorist activities perpetrated by a certain segment of extremist members of the Albanian national minority.

A particular problem is the fact that Albania, a neighbouring country to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, has become a haven for all kinds of terrorist groups and a base for committing terrorist actions and brutal attacks on the territory of FR Yugoslavia. For example, in the short period between 6 March and 28 June 1998, over 60 brutal provocations and incidents, such as: attempts to illegally cross the border, to smuggle armaments, attack border units, infiltrate mercenaries and mujaheddin, demolish border signs, etc. were perpetrated.

On the other hand, by statements made by its officials and political leaders, Albania is publicly instigating terrorism and terrorist attacks on the FR Yugoslavia, thus encouraging separatist aspirations of the Albanian national minority.

Regretfully, certain international quarters lend their support to such Albanian political leaders, while endeavouring to further dramatize the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, thus deceiving public opinion and favouring a permanent destabilization of this region.

The Yugoslav authorities are making maximum efforts to improve the present situation on a legal basis, to eradicate terrorism and to preserve the territorial integrity of the country, in order to provide a normal environment for all the inhabitants of Kosovo and Metohija.

In this connection, I must point out that the problem of displaced persons is exclusively the consequence of ethnic Albanian extremists' terrorist activities, and that once they are thwarted, mass returns of civilians follow. If terrorist gangs halted their criminal activities altogether, all displaced persons would have returned to their homes in a couple of days, particularly so since most among them are accommodated with their next of kin at present.

The Governments of the Republic of Serbia and of FR Yugoslavia are investing maximum efforts to facilitate these returns, with foodstuffs and construction materials for house repairing provided in close cooperation with various international humanitarian organizations.

In an attempt to illustrate the above - that the problems in Kosovo and Metohija have nothing to do with the human rights situation, but that what we have here is an open attempt to force a secession of a segment of a sovereign State - let me apprise you of the terrorist actions of ethnic Albanian separatists in Kosovo and Metohija from 1 January to 16 August 1998. In this period, terrorists perpetrated 1,041 terrorist attacks altogether, of which 555 were against the members or facilities of the Ministry of the

Interior of the Republic of Serbia (228 in Decani, 73 in Serbica, 65 in Klina, etc.); 66 members of the Ministry of the Interior were killed in this period, 156 received heavy injuries, 103 sustained light bodily injuries, and 10 among them were abducted. In 539 cases, members of the Ministry were attacked while on duty.

Some 486 attacks against citizens and facilities were perpetrated in that period, 75 persons were killed (29 Serbs and Montenegrins, 42 ethnic Albanians and 4 other nationalities), and 47 heavily injured.

Terrorists abducted 177 persons (126 Serbs and Montenegrins, 42 ethnic Albanians loyal to the Republic of Serbia, 6 Roma, 1 citizen of the FYR of Macedonia, 1 Muslim and 1 Bulgarian national), killing 15 of them; 116 are unaccounted for as yet, 7 have escaped and 39 have been released.

In these terrorist actions, individual or collective, ethnic Albanian separatists resorted to automatic weapons on 542 occasions, launching mortars or hand grenades 145 times, snipers in 80 cases, hand bombs in 22 cases, etc.

On the other hand, 23 cases of halting of vehicles and searching of passengers by masked armed persons on roads in Kosovo and Metohija have been recorded and 31 cases of incursions of such persons into homes and other facilities, perpetrating severe criminal offences.

Despite these problems, the authorities of Serbia and FR Yugoslavia have always been and are still ready for an unconditional dialogue with the representatives of the ethnic Albanian national minority on all outstanding issues. Regretfully, apart from failing to condemn terrorism, ethnic Albanian representatives reject any dialogue, presumably in hope that the situation in Kosovo and Metohija would further exacerbate which, as they hope, would be conducive to a NATO military intervention, thus making their dreams of a "Greater Albania" come true.

Being aware that a huge majority of the Sub-Commission members sincerely adhere to protection and promotion of human rights in the world, I do hope that no one will be taken in by the provocations aimed at the Sub-Commission's joining the campaign of pressures upon my country, conducted by certain international quarters.

I would ask you, Excellency, to have this letter circulated to all the members of the Sub-Commission and to have it published as an official document of the Sub-Commission, under items 2 and 8.

(Signed): Miroslav MILOSEVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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